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In memory of Ian Beecroft

Marko Turina*

Department of Cardiovascular Surgery, University Hospital Zurich, Rämistrasse 100, 8091 Zurich, Switzerland

* Corresponding author. Tel: +41-44-2552229; fax: +41-44-2559270; e-mail: marko.turina@usz.ch (M. Turina).

The European Association for Cardio-Thoracic Surgery (EACTS) mourns the loss of Ian Beecroft, Editorial Manager of the European Journal of Cardio-Thoracic Surgery (EJCTS, 1996–2010). Ian died on Sunday 2 September 2012, during one of his adventure trips white water kayaking the Tsrarap Chu in Ladakh, India.

Shortly after the switch to Elsevier as publisher of EJCTS, I approached Ian Beecroft with a job offer to work for the journal, and he agreed to join us as Editorial Manager in 1996. Over the course of the next 14 years, his dedication and foresight went on to contribute greatly to the success of EJCTS, now a foremost journal in its field. He quickly reorganized the editorial office, introducing a precise filing and reminder system, effective not only for authors, but also for reviewers and editors. This streamlined the work and shortened manuscript processing times. In light of the increasing workload for editorial staff, we decided to switch to an electronic system of manuscript submission and processing, a bold and – at that time – risky change. Ian made a careful study of the available electronic journal management systems, and – after the usual teething troubles had been overcome – we were able to switch completely to an electronic journal office in 1999. This made EJCTS the first journal in its field to embrace this pioneering platform, which is often taken for granted today. It was Ian's profound interest in this matter and his excellent knowledge of possibilities and pitfalls of electronic journal management that enabled us to make these changes without any major problems. Ian was deeply interested in the workings of CTSNet, which he saw as a key connection between the various journals and associations, and he attended all meetings of CTSNet editors during his tenure of office.

Another significant contribution of his was the launch of the Interactive CardioVascular and Thoracic Surgery in September 2002. This interactive journal was a true novelty in its discipline, promising rapid publication and the possibility of entering into a

discussion on article content. ICVTS was self-published by the EACTS at that time, but it was Ian Beecroft who was behind the success of this Herculean feat, outsourcing printing and typesetting to suppliers in Ireland, ultimately making this venture a financially viable one.

Ian Beecroft was a meticulous, almost pedantic worker. During my daily visits to the editorial office, where I would hurriedly deal with manuscripts and all other related business before rushing back to the operating room, or to my rounds, he could be observed returning pencils and stacks of papers to their original location.

Ian lived in Martigny, so we arranged a room for him in the vicinity of our office for his use during the working week. He preferred to travel by car, and I gave my parking spot outside the hospital, which, at that time, was prominently labelled 'Director of Clinic for Cardiovascular Surgery'. Ian was in the kayaking business back then, and he used to travel in a dilapidated transporter, which he had modified to carry a large number of kayaks. This strange automobile obviously stood out amongst the more-distinguished vehicles belonging to other clinic directors, raised many eyebrows, and elicited several hesitant inquiries with my secretary about my changing interests.

After leaving the EJCTS, Ian started a consulting business for scientific publishing, pursuing matters of scientific integrity and plagiarism. We kept in close contact and had lively exchanges on these matters, even shortly before his departure on his fateful last trip.

EACTS is deeply indebted to Ian Beecroft, and all of us who have had the privilege to work with him are saddened by his tragic demise.

Ian is survived by his wife Raphaëlle and his children Neal, Gaëlle and Jonathan, of whom he was so proud. EACTS expresses its sincere condolences to his family.